

## Recycle That Christmas Tree

AFTER Christmas, the trees that held such a special place in our hearts before the holiday usually end up in the local garbage dump. But there are better ways to dispose of them, and here are a few environmentally friendly suggestions.

Try placing your tree in the yard or garden so birds and other wildlife can use it to build their homes for the winter.

Whole trees can be used to make effective sand- and soil-erosion barriers, and to prevent weed growth. Or, chip your tree and use it as mulch around other trees and shrubs, or in flowerbeds.

If you choose to throw your tree away, cut it into four-foot lengths and tie or bundle them together. Trees that have been flocked, painted or fire-proofed, however, cannot be accepted for recycling. And some landfills might not accept the trees at all, so check before making an unnecessary trip.

An alternative is to take

your tree to a drop-off site, but remember to remove all tinsel, garland, ornaments, tree stands, plastic bags or other man-made materials.

Trees may become an alternative fuel in special power-generation facilities. They can also be sunk into private ponds to create a refuge or feeding area for fish.

And, to keep on benefiting from your tree after the holidays, cut it into firewood.

For more information, contact your post or local recycling center. You can also call "Keep America Beautiful" at (203) 323-8987, or visit the website at [www.kab.org](http://www.kab.org). — U.S. Army Environmental Center

## Cold Regions Test Center Helps to Stock Trout

THE primary mission of the Fort Greely, Alaska, Cold Regions Test Center is to test weapon systems and munitions in the frigid cold of the state's rugged interior.

But when Fronte Parker, a fisheries biologist for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, needed help late last year in getting to a remote

high mountain lake to stock it with trout, CRTC officials were glad to assist. Without their aid the lake would never have been stocked and more than 500 young fish might have died.

Parker transported the seven-inch lake trout from a hatchery near Anchorage to the road closest to the lake — some 365 miles away. He then transferred the fish to a smaller tank pulled by a snowmobile for the final 35-mile cross-country jaunt to Kenna Lake. However, faced with trail difficulties and the danger of the fish-tank water freezing, he was forced to return to his truck, where he transferred the fish back to the large tank before driving back to Anchorage.

The next day he phoned CRTC commander LTC Robert Brewster and asked for help. Brewster asked Jim Storey, a test engineer and 26-year CRTC veteran, to see what could be done.

"I asked him to describe his mission and his equipment," said Storey. "I then told him we definitely could help him. The necessary people and equipment were here and available."

Two small tracked vehicles were prepared and ready to go when Parker returned the next morning. Within 30 minutes, he and CRTC personnel had transferred the fish and were rolling over Alaska's frozen tundra.

Besides Parker and Storey, CRTC test technicians Mike Koke and Mike Kingston participated in the fish rescue.

After more than five hours,

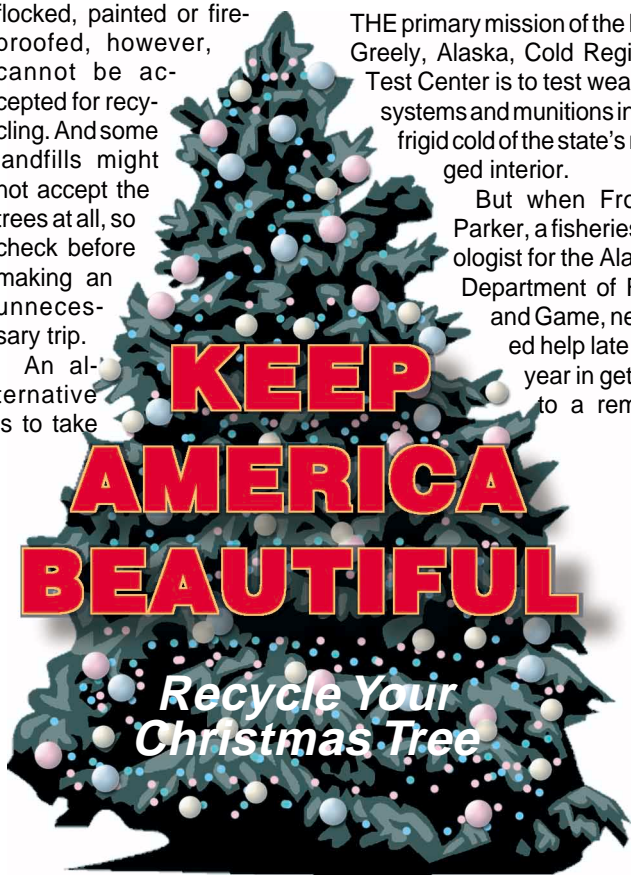


**Fisheries biologist Fronte Parker transfers some of the 500 lake trout used to stock Alaska's remote Lake Kenna.**

the two vehicles carrying four men and 500 fish arrived at the shore of Kenna Lake. Surrounded by rugged 14,000-foot mountain peaks, the 50-acre lake was covered with 10 inches of ice. After a few minutes of drilling through the ice, the crew transferred the trout from the tank into the lake and began the return trek.

"We basically knew the way back, but it was dark so we had to be careful," Storey said. "In several areas, snow had drifted over the tracks we made on the way up. We stopped to check our compass bearings several times."

The fish were put into the lake in late November to spend the winter beneath the ice. The conditions necessary for fish to live and prosper are determined by the amount of available oxygen and an ample supply of food, conditions Kenna Lake readily met, Storey added.



"The fish were only available for a short time, so CRTC's aid was essential," said Storey. "The trout had originated as eggs harvested from another high mountain lake, and were brought to the hatchery in Anchorage. Someday, when they have reached adulthood, the fish at Kenna Lake may provide a similar service." — *Chuck Wullenjohn, CRTC Public Affairs Office*

## Fort Huachuca Begins New Water Initiative

EASEMENTS to reduce groundwater pumping near the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area in southern Arizona will be purchased under a proposed project announced in August by officials at Fort Huachuca, Ariz.

The purchase of conservation easements is a new initiative for the post in its efforts to support an installation-wide Water Resource Management Plan and to help meet the Army's obligations under the Endangered Species Act.

The announcement came during an update on the post's progress of its 10-year water-management plan. Other federal agencies in the region have also purchased conservation easements in the area.

"Fort Huachuca has developed proactive management practices that have gone well beyond our minimum compliance responsibilities. We're the first in the Army to purchase actual conservation easements," said MG John D. Thomas Jr., commanding general of the U.S. Army Intelligence Center and Fort Huachuca. "This new project is a critical step in our continuing efforts to be good stewards of the environment and good neighbors in the Upper San Pedro Valley."

He said preserving water resources is not only vital to current and future mission performance, but also ensures that the San Pedro area continues to provide critical habitat to a variety of endangered species.

Under the proposed action, The Nature Conservancy will use federal funds to purchase land for conservation easements within five miles of the San Pedro River. The Army will be one of the federal agencies funding the easements.

A conservation easement is a legal, perpetual agreement that contains permanent restrictions on land use and development in order to protect its conservation value. Each agreement is somewhat different.

"Depending on the willingness of private-property owners to sell applicable land rights, this project could reduce the impact on the region's groundwater aquifer up to 4,000 acre-feet per year," said Tom Cochran, Fort Huachuca's environmental division chief. "Conservation easements are a positive step to reduce the water pumping near the river in a meaningful way, while still preserving property rights and the traditional ranching lifestyle."

To determine the impacts of the proposal, Fort Huachuca, in cooperation with The Nature Conservancy and the Bureau of Land Management, developed an environmental assessment to analyze the purchase, transfer and management of conservation easements in the southern Upper San Pedro Basin.

The process begins with The Nature Conservancy purchasing property from a seller, with the intention to resell the prop-

erty after the deed restrictions are in place; or, a seller could negotiate for the conservation easement without the property transfer. Typically, the property will include irrigated land.

After The Nature Conservancy has filed the deed restrictions, the Bureau of Land Management will oversee compliance with those restrictions.

The easements allow for cattle and other livestock grazing, some division of property, homesteads and commercial activity, if the venture requires only low water use.

Fort Huachuca, the U.S. Fish

and Wildlife Service, and The Nature Conservancy will determine the water conservation based on observed reductions in the acre-foot levels of pumped water. The credits the Army receives for its water savings will then be put toward its total water pumping reduction goal.

As the role model for conservation and environmental stewardship in the southwest, Fort Huachuca continues to save water through aggressive conservation, reuse and replacement projects. — *Tanja M. Linton, Fort Huachuca PAO*



## Final Call for Sharp Shooters!

THE submission deadline for the 2001 Environmental Sharp Shooters photo contest is Dec. 31. We encourage soldiers and civilians involved in environmental protection, clean up or other activities that promote a healthy environment to submit their best photographs for a special "Environmental Sharp Shooters" feature to be run in the April 2002 issue. Entries may be submitted for the categories of Readiness, Stewardship, Well-being and Community Outreach.

To download a copy of the Environmental Sharp Shooters application form and a complete set of rules, visit the U.S. Army Environmental Center website at <http://aec.army.mil>. You can also contact Cynthia Houston at [Environmental.Front@aec.apgea.army.mil](mailto:Environmental.Front@aec.apgea.army.mil) or call (410) 436-1270. — *USAEC PAO*

Please send your contributions or questions to Cynthia Houston, National Outreach Team Leader, U.S. Army Environmental Center, 5179 Hoadley Road, Attn.: SFIM-AEC-PA, Bldg. 4415, Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD 21010-5401, or e-mail [Environmental.Front@aec.apgea.army.mil](mailto:Environmental.Front@aec.apgea.army.mil). Houston can be reached by phone at (410) 436-1270 or (DSN) 584-1270.